



Meeting Notes

As a citizen-based plan, community engagement is essential to ensure that the plan reflects the values and priorities of the community and its residents and stakeholders. A broad cross-section of citizens, including those involved in community organizations, civic clubs, neighborhood associations, land and business interests, representatives of local and regional coordinating agencies, and residents played an essential role at the outset of the plan development process to provide input as to community issues and concerns, as well as their opinions and ideas as to the solutions and priorities.

On July 6, 2006, a series of small group interviews were held concurrently with the Discovery and Reconnaissance phase of the work program. These focus group meetings consisted of one-hour discussions between a representative of Kendig Keast Collaborative (KKC), the project consultants, and 10 to 15 community members who expressed their ideas and preferences as to how the community develops in the next 20 years and beyond. These discussions, together with the input received through the series of ward congress meetings, formed the foundational basis of this plan. The plan is issue-based, meaning that it began with the identification of issues, exploration as to the nature and cause of the issues, and, ultimately, an expressed deliberate course of action to overcome obstacles and resolve difficulties to achieve the overall vision for the Year 2025.

The input meetings provided opportunities for the residents to band together to collectively initiate the process to forge the future of their community. The discovery and reconnaissance period included the following meetings:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Meeting</u>	<u>Approximate Attendance</u>
July 6, 2006	Focus Group Interviews	80 persons
September 7, 2006	Ward 1 Congress	90 persons
September 14, 2006	Ward 2 Congress	150 persons
September 21, 2006	Ward 3 Congress	90 persons
September 28, 2006	Ward 4 Congress	110 persons
October 5, 2006	Economic Development Forum	110 persons
October 10, 2006	Sam Houston State University Forum	110 persons
TOTAL		740 persons

Below are the issues and ideas raised over the course of the discovery and reconnaissance phase, which directly contributed to the vision, goals, and objectives of this plan.

Meeting Notes

Focus Group Interviews: July 6, 2006

Group One (Landowners/Developers)

- ♦ Affordability of development standards/impact.
- ♦ Cost of business – level of code enforcement; building and annexation/restoration
- ♦ Elkins Lake: cheap lots still available; can't compete with affordable building
- ♦ Water/sewer rates contributes to expense of building
- ♦ Lack of business/industry bringing more retirees
- ♦ 50/50 City vs. ETJ population
- ♦ Negative image – determines growth
- ♦ Come for green space/environment
- ♦ Affordable housing is a manufactured home
- ♦ Who is our market?
- ♦ Impediments – ordinance and procedural ambiguities cause problems
- ♦ Slow absorption – difficult to get economies of scale
- ♦ Huntsville relies on Houston, oil market, Anadarko, etc. (we don't control our growth)
- ♦ Equal enforcement of the law – interpret code differently depending on whether there are people against it
- ♦ Consistent application of standards is needed
- ♦ PUD on Elks Drive – Bankrupt (park space, retention never done)
- ♦ \$80,000 isn't affordable for many people
- ♦ Manufactured housing is not the answer – not sustainable; can't enforce building codes inside manufactured homes
- ♦ Manufactured homes are allowed on individual lots
- ♦ Neighborhood Conservation district – existing neighborhoods with deed restrictions
- ♦ Zoning in Huntsville is about what you can't do rather than what you can do
- ♦ City – first response is what you "can't do" versus a "can do" attitude
- ♦ City must be active in finding ways to support economic development
- ♦ Dilapidated signs are a problem
- ♦ Why are our water/sewer rates so high?
- ♦ 34 percent of county is tax exempt; makes revenue generation tough
- ♦ Walker County Certificate of Convenience and Necessity (CCN) has limited capacity; questionable fire protection

Group Two (Chamber of Commerce)

- ♦ 16,000 live on campus/20,000 anticipated by 2010
- ♦ Things for students to do: would like to see putt-putt/ go carts/ theater/ entertainment
- ♦ More student apartment dwellers
- ♦ Student mobility is an issue – getting to retail stores, etc.

- ♦ How do we create a Huntsville as a destination?
- ♦ There is limited space for business expansion
- ♦ No industrial park
- ♦ No railroad
- ♦ Retail leakage of sales tax is significant
- ♦ Lake area is growing – slower here
- ♦ Attracting physicians is difficult
- ♦ Not a singles atmosphere
- ♦ Students work out of town
- ♦ Shopping should be an “experience”
- ♦ Downtown closes at 5:00 p.m.
- ♦ Lack of employment opportunities for graduates
- ♦ Prioritize small businesses
- ♦ Employment for dual income homes – challenge
- ♦ Revitalize around the University
- ♦ Limited numbers of new homes – people are living elsewhere
- ♦ No new homes under \$200,000 outside of Elkins Lake

Group Two (Opportunities)

- ♦ Live music venue is downtown
- ♦ Full service motel with meeting facilities
- ♦ 150 new professors within the next year
- ♦ Decline in student enrollment at HISD
- ♦ HISD to offer new programs next year: Pre-engineering program; Cosmetology program; and entrepreneurialism
- ♦ Sense of pride in schools
- ♦ Focus on academic “experience” – strengthen the University
- ♦ Need a residential campus
- ♦ Town Creek Walk – idea

Group Three (Neighborhoods)

- ♦ Location of Section 8 housing – found in the middle of neighborhoods; criminal activity – neighborhood degradation
- ♦ Rental versus home ownership – problem in certain areas; particularly around the University
- ♦ Owners purchase and rent to multiples – maintenance issue
- ♦ Single versus multiple families
- ♦ Streets divide neighborhoods (example - 16th Street)
- ♦ Neighborhood redevelopment
- ♦ Neighborhood planning – get organized – assist in forming restrictions
- ♦ Sulfur Springs – clean city example
- ♦ 16th Street would work with u-turn at S.H. 30
- ♦ One-way streets are a mistake

Meeting Notes

- ♦ Preserve “community”
- ♦ Don’t bisect neighborhoods with streets
- ♦ Water plan is vital to our future
- ♦ How do we handle 20,000 students – traffic policies/parking (Elks and Old Houston Road)
- ♦ West versus east sides: everything is happening on the west side; 800 ac TIRZ
- ♦ Reinvest to the east – economic development opportunities
- ♦ Capital recovery fee for apartments
- ♦ Sinking fund for utility provisions
- ♦ Incentives to direct development
- ♦ Littering is a problem
- ♦ Implementation is essential
- ♦ Citizen input is needed
- ♦ No eminent domain for property value increase

Group Four (Transportation)

- ♦ Public transportation – students across I-45
- ♦ Help traffic/parking around the University
- ♦ 3,500 live on campus – 50 percent do not have vehicles – in residence hall
- ♦ Brazos Transit
- ♦ East-West traffic in Walker County is a problem
- ♦ 11th Street is over-burdened
- ♦ 10th Street or 16th Street could go from I-45 to S.H. 190 or northern loop
- ♦ Inside S.H. 19 is congested
- ♦ TxDOT is adding shoulders on S.H. 190
- ♦ Can’t expand 11th Street anymore
- ♦ Light synchronization increases speeds/limits side street access
- ♦ Access management needed (example: 11th Street)
- ♦ City codes don’t match TxDOT access requirements
- ♦ Avenue I and Avenue J – students crossing (by HEB and McDonald’s); dangerous
- ♦ Street markings, push buttons for pedestrians
- ♦ ADA standards difficult for elevated street cross-overs
- ♦ Lake Road – no crosswalk
- ♦ S.H. 75/F.M. 1791 school bus delays – signal timing (must rebuild the intersection) – short light phasing
- ♦ MLK/11th Street light is problematic
- ♦ Warning signs (S.H. 19, S.H. 30, S.H. 75, and F.M. 247) bus stops and truck stops congest them
- ♦ Airport Master Plan was done (2002 or 2003)
- ♦ Extend to 6,400 ft runway – it’s now 5,000 ft
- ♦ Encroachment is a concern
- ♦ Asphalt maintenance

- ♦ 30,000 to 40,000 operations per year at the airport
- ♦ Aug 2006: 16,500 students; 2010: 20,000; 2015: 25,000; 50 percent of students
- ♦ University shuttle system – satellite parking - Pair with parking district-incentive
- ♦ One parking garage with contract parking on campus – no state funds
- ♦ Shuttle needs to pick students up at apartments so students don't drive to a satellite lot
- ♦ Park-n-Ride: other side of exit ramp toward S.H. 19
- ♦ No lighting along sidewalks between campus and Downtown
- ♦ Sidewalk master plan needed
- ♦ Trail master plan needed
- ♦ Sidewalks only required on arterial roads
- ♦ 17th Street and Sam Houston – student crossings and high speed traffic; dangerous
- ♦ Trans Texas Corridor – impact on City?
- ♦ Loop 19 at Bearcat – possible park and ride?
- ♦ Smither overpass?
- ♦ One way feeders on/off under construction tossing traffic to local streets – higher maintenance, expansion required
- ♦ Loop 19 and S.H. 75 South - Southward Drive on – No cross streets – 4-lane undivided – no cross-overs but at State Highways; more traffic on local streets is the result
- ♦ Look at local street system
- ♦ S.H. 30 – 4-lane divided
- ♦ 17th Street – TxDOT is working on it
- ♦ S.H. I90 – widening shoulders to County line

Group Five (Parks and Recreation)

- ♦ Used building materials – 10 percent of waste - burning now; reuse/recycle of materials; reduce waste hauling costs; help with housing affordability
- ♦ Need an arts program – music, dance, theater – inter-racial
- ♦ Timber companies selling tracts for development; opportunity
- ♦ National capital – free assets
- ♦ Unique landscape
- ♦ Blue Lagoon – scuba use; 7 springs and 7 hills of Huntsville; sitting on springs; build the community around the park system (ex: Austin)
- ♦ Accessible/linkable
- ♦ Bike lanes 150 acres – Downtown park/pool (lap and recreation pool); high school meets at pool
- ♦ Skatepark is needed
- ♦ 700 baseball players
- ♦ Need to upgrade all sport facilities; there are four fields – no practice fields – use school grounds
- ♦ Limited youth activities

Meeting Notes

- ♦ No teen center, etc... - Can't use fields for organized sports
- ♦ Opportunity for tournaments – economic development
- ♦ Two softball fields are City-owned
- ♦ Need sports complex
- ♦ 400 girls in softball
- ♦ No facilities outside of school year
- ♦ One more softball field needed
- ♦ USA swimming – must be part of the City
- ♦ Northeast Aqua Association in Houston
- ♦ Regional swim meets at the pool
- ♦ Concern for out-sourcing the maintenance of the new pool
- ♦ TDCJ land available for park development?
- ♦ State Park – City provides water/sewer
- ♦ Lone Star Trail – longest in Texas?
- ♦ Mountain biking is popular
- ♦ Trails as fire breaks and access for fire fighters
- ♦ Wildfire protection integrated into design of park system
- ♦ Perfect location
- ♦ TDCJ = land locked
- ♦ Limited park staff
- ♦ TDCJ - work stands for park maintenance; leverage more, underutilized now

Group Six (Downtown)

- ♦ Quality of place = authenticity
- ♦ Four businesses on square that have been there 100+ years (Gibbs Bros, Smither/Co Title, Berks Jewelry)
- ♦ Combination of business types + residential – diversity is essential
- ♦ National Guard Armory for student events – opportunity for Downtown
- ♦ Entertainment venues – district like San Marcos
- ♦ Closes at midnight
- ♦ Live music, coffee house, book store, movies at town theater
- ♦ “Keep it Huntsville”
- ♦ Drinking area – still old boundaries; extend out to new City limits
- ♦ 35 percent drop-off of business in December – University is key; don't cater to enough to them
- ♦ Downtown living – captured market
- ♦ University Avenue– pedestrian spine – improve sidewalks/lighting
- ♦ Bike racks needed
- ♦ Can't bike/rollerblade on campus
- ♦ Bus station 12th Street/Avenue J – prisoners wait at station – negative impression
- ♦ Walls Unit is close to the University – concern; possibly the oldest prison in the continental U.S.
- ♦ Texas Prison Rodeo – return of Texas Prison Rodeo facility

- ♦ Parking problem is bad
- ♦ Bad traffic on Sam Houston and University – TxDOT controls festivals – Downtown stage
- ♦ Constraints to pedestrian movement
- ♦ Downtown is affordable – key to success
- ♦ Sam Houston Folk Festival
- ♦ Historical tours
- ♦ University Drive between Downtown and University – link
- ♦ No coupons at University – difficult to market – campus kiosks?
- ♦ Student blackboard – on-line media
- ♦ \$64 million in tourism
- ♦ Way-finding

WARD 1 CONGRESS – SEPTEMBER 7, 2006

Input from comment cards

- ♦ City regulations on the slums - these are exploitative and pathetic
- ♦ Raised walkways over Sam Houston Ave @ 16th & 17th and maybe 19th
- ♦ Get the town to accept and support the University – If you build it, they will come/stay
- ♦ We didn't get to talk enough about our library needs. We have badly outgrown what we have and need a new one – IMPORTANT!
- ♦ We are all for growth and new businesses coming to town, but they should pay their own way - just as those of us who have businesses here right now did. NO TAX ABATEMENT. NO MORE TAX REINVESTMENT ZONES! (Abolish the present TIRZ plans)
- ♦ Huntsville needs pride and show it – we are not just a prison town.
 - Beautify areas as much as possible
 - Trash pick up
 - Use inmate labor as much as possible
 - Businesses do use “green” building in areas that require it – so why can't we?
- ♦ Extend the restaurant/bar hours to 2:00 a.m; may bring more business - will keep the student dollars here; safer than forcing students to go across county lines.
- ♦ Downtown district
- ♦ Greyhound Bus Station / prisoner release is a major problem (they are very recognizable). This puts a damper on Downtown business; needs to be moved to I-45
- ♦ Parking structure for the university students in the avenues
- ♦ Enforce parking in the Avenues
- ♦ Problem: This is a comprehensive plan that allows for no discussion of the importance of the arts and what part the city government should play in providing those opportunities to the citizens

Meeting Notes

- ♦ Utilize the workforce of inmates in Huntsville to help build and maintain the parks and greenways
- ♦ Consider closing the Walls Unit and turning it into a museum
- ♦ Downtown needs historic preservation and building codes that take into account the architecture of that era
- ♦ Downtown needs to gain residential for students...something like loft apartments or luxury apartments...think dense population growth
- ♦ The businesses Downtown need to cater to the student life with longer hours, etc. to tie Downtown/Community to SHSU we need to develop University Avenue with business to residences with greenways and bike trails instead of developing around I-45, we should revitalize Downtown and focus on SHSU – grow from center out; make this a University town
- ♦ Consider developing east of the University

Input from residents

- ♦ Streets - Dig out and repave streets that have been excessively “tarred over.”
Examples: 16th Street and 17th Street between Avenues M and O
- ♦ Recycling - Include in the new garbage collection system a curb recycling system, providing along with the garbage containers to be furnished by the City, a separate container for recyclables, as is currently done in some cities.
- ♦ Parking - Include ample, feasible parking space in any future City project. The Wynne Home has no parking space for patrons.
- ♦ Green space - Enforce the 10 percent green space requirement for businesses that was in force when the present Brookshire Brothers was built.
- ♦ Safety and access for motorists and pedestrians. Set and enforce standards for vegetation and structures – such as hedges, fences and overgrowth – to prevent blocking visibility and access to public streets and sidewalks. Negative example 1: Poison ivy grow over the public sidewalk at the corner of 17th and Avenue O; Negative example 2: A huge bush is growing two feet into the street in the 1400 block of 16th street
- ♦ I commend the City Council for stepping to the plate and agreeing to build the new city pool. However, if you don’t hire a full-time aquatic manager you will never be able to see the full revenue potential of the pool. Most people who contributed toward the construction of the pool did so under the impression they would have pool access year-round. Also, the high school swim team practices from September thru May – 5 days a week and 3 days a week March thru May. They expected access on September 1st – now who knows when they will be able to use the city pool.
- ♦ City Council members must realize that opening the new pool only during summer months will be a losing proposition. Please hire an aquatic manager and turn this new million dollar project into something that is well run and an asset to the citizens of Huntsville and Walker County.
- ♦ I think Huntsville needs more facilities to keep the youth of our town out of trouble...and better shopping!

- ♦ More Restaurants (Olive Garden), TGIF, Applebee's, Target, a Real Mall, conference center, housing development, fix the streets, ice/roller skating rink
- ♦ Elkins Lake needs street lights
- ♦ Crime at 14th Street and Avenue O
- ♦ Knock down/improve Russellville
- ♦ Attract industry/business
- ♦ Something to keep students here on weekend
- ♦ Nature conservation (keep the trees)
- ♦ Nature thoroughfares – the trees and nature is what makes Huntsville, Huntsville
- ♦ Restoration to downtown – parking problem (maybe a parking garage)
- ♦ I hope to see in the future that Huntsville is able to grow and offer new incentives to new businesses. I would like us to keep what makes us special but to grow and offer new careers and entertainment opportunities
- ♦ I'm frustrated with the swimming pool project.
- ♦ More variety in restaurants. I mostly like the town.
- ♦ I'd like to see larger companies come in to increase individual living standards. (High Tech jobs, increase income, better benefits)
- ♦ Storm/rain flows in the Avenues
- ♦ Better up-keep of roads in the Avenues
- ♦ Mail received before 7:00 p.m.
- ♦ Power goes out at Avenue R and 20th Street all the time
- ♦ Higher paid teachers
- ♦ More Diverse restaurants
- ♦ More efficient ways to traverse city

Land Use and Transportation Break-out Sessions

- ♦ Land Use Goal 1: Quality, sustainable affordable housing and livable neighborhoods
 - \$80-120,000 range of house price needed
 - Identify obstacles/constraints to affordable housing
 - \$45-50,000 needed based on median income
 - Gospel Hill area – revitalize, utilities, land title issues, legal assistance, can't get loans
 - Help them help themselves
 - Define target areas for assistance
 - Support Habitat for Humanity
 - Bearcat attack – organize, build relations
 - Mission work
 - Code enforcement, property maintenance
 - Policing, don't stand for drug houses, be proactive, hold landlords accountable
- ♦ Land Use Goal 2: Protection of sensitive resources and conservation of the environment

Meeting Notes

- Preserve trees, disease issue, all property – residential/non-residential
- Tree planting
- Preserve green space – codes – 10 percent minimum, not specific as to where
- Town Creek- clean up, protect, Eastham Thomason Park – wetland area
- More green space
- Sensitive planning/ site design
- Compensation necessary – Federal laws
- Resources contribute to character – need teeth
- Educate – what is a resource/natural asset, what exists now – uncover, make available to public
- Engineering standards – drainage
- Require plan submittal before – development clearing
- Silt control needed
- Better construction methods by City
- Air Quality – clean industry
- ♦ Land Use Goal 4: University integration and enhancement of its environs
 - Entertainment – Summer/weekends students leave
 - Keep pace with University growth, keep them here, student job market, grow responsibly
 - More campus housing – affordable units
 - Housing for faculty – price range
 - Connect University and Downtown, awareness, businesses to cater to University - students, faculty, visitors
 - Plan for University Avenue
 - Distance/remote learning
 - Joint public relations, hospitality, stay in Huntsville
 - Campus-like atmosphere, gathering spaces, open areas, joint use facilities, community policing
 - Four percent per year growth at the University
 - Entertainment, bookstores, coffee houses, go-karts
 - Student/police relations
- ♦ Land Use Goal 5: Downtown district as a multi-use destination
 - Re-use of vacant buildings, incentives
 - Mom & Pop businesses preferred
 - Asbestos removal
 - Left signal at 11th Street and University Avenue, two state highways
 - Sequence lights – Bowers & 20th Street – turns left
 - Implement University Avenue path
 - Pedestrian lighting/signage/trails
 - Gateways
 - Parking time limits, many tickets
 - Designate court parking
 - Sidewalk plan



- Downtown fringe – residential feel
- Unique selling proposition - What do we sell/stand for?
- Maintain Main Street Program

- ♦ Land Use Goal 6: Convenient, accessible, and connected parks and greenways
 - Determine where parks needed, land swaps
 - Blue lagoon connection
 - How to maintain parks – TDCJ, free labor of inmates
 - Town Creek – continue to develop sections to connect
 - Map/communicate what is available
 - Clean, i.e. Downtown, pick-up programs, use TDCJ, fines, apply laws consistently
 - Trails/bikeways, connect spaces
 - Think about maintenance costs
 - Pecan groves in parks
 - Public gardens
 - Recreation programs, City-owned/operated, TDCJ properties – interim use? joint use?
 - Define character – how are we unique?

- ♦ Land Use Goal 7: Managed development pattern concurrent with adequate facilities and services
 - Inadequacies now – high priority
 - Fire/Police (24) – high priority, 2.2 police/1000 – Homeland security
 - Parts of town without basic services
 - Fire response at TDCJ is City responsibility
 - \$26,487 per year County’s budget for police – University + TDCJ must pay share
 - Library inadequate
 - Building new fire station
 - Hurricane preparedness
 - Feasibility of west-side parkway – recovery

- ♦ Transportation Goal 1: Increased transportation options for non-driving residents
 - Public transportation system, state starter dollars (joint City and SHSU), help parking/congestion, mobility across I-45, apartments focus, late night for students
 - University – run system?
 - Sufficient ridership?
 - Education – promote bike/pedestrian options – technology
 - Non-auto lanes
 - Tied to Economic development efforts to city- commute, business access, “surplus” parking areas
 - Sidewalks – safety (out of streets), schools

Meeting Notes

- Federal/state funds for small city public transit
- Private taxi service – enhance/support market
- ♦ Transportation Goal 2: Efficient traffic movement via new streets, access management, and improved signalization
 - Street connectivity (e.g. 16th Street)
 - Neighborhood opposition/disruption
 - What amount of growth are we planning for? (SHSU growth)
 - Access limitations on state highways – business impacts
 - Signal timing near courthouse (11th Street University), TxDOT (state highways)
- ♦ Transportation Goal 3: Improved University access for staff, students and visitors
 - Taking traffic off current streets (City-University shuttle)
 - Students in rental housing
 - Narrow streets – options (no left turn certain hours from certain driveways, one-ways)
 - Improved access to back side of SHSU – Bearkat
- ♦ Transportation Goal 4: Parking management in special areas (Downtown, University area, neighborhoods)
 - Parking garages feasible? University, Downtown
 - Downtown – perimeter parking, shared parking, transit, convenience/proximity, county parking, perception – loss of business, had meters in past, pedestrian safety, pedestrian signals!
 - Signals, on state highways, TxDOT coordination
 - Left turn controls at certain hours
- ♦ Transportation Goal 5: Improved pedestrian systems around the University and throughout the City
 - Sidewalks – discontinuous, security concern, pedestrian safety, schools, children
 - Take cars off street, help parking, access issue
 - Crossing major streets too, TxDOT on state highways, neighborhoods have narrow streets, (Gospel Hill Road/2827)
 - Pedestrians - University Avenue plan, do it (SHSU – Downtown)
 - Crosswalks – who has priority? Signs, lake/Sam Houston/Ave J (HEB)
 - Turning vehicles /crossing at random
 - Intersection design/improvements (curb radius)
 - Visibility at intersections, signs covered by trees
 - Citizen problem identification/response (dial “311”?)
 - Businesses parking (avenues), not customers, impacted by on-street, emergency vehicle access, enforcement, other parking options
 - University – City cooperation – so many commuter students, frequent shuttles

- ♦ Transportation Goal 6: Protection of the airport environs and its long-term utilization
 - Airport runway extension, feasible for jets?
 - Federal monies
 - Airport building height limits (SHSU)
 - Private development (residential) near airport.
- ♦ Transportation Goal 7: Corridor gateways and enhanced streetscape environments
 - Corridors/gateways
 - Higher expectations/standards/pride
 - Streetscapes, downtown-SHSU (lighting, trees,
 - Adopt a street (student payback to Huntsville)
 - Expose underground streams and bridges
 - How to tackle tree preservation, more teeth, more incentives, pre-development clearing limitations, replacement - enforcement challenge
 - Other factors – signs, inflatable

Bus Access

- Wal-Mart, hospital, STRPP by Hastings/Walgreens, Post Office, Mall – Brazos transit route plan, transit grants
- Remote parking lots, shuttle

Trails

- For fitness too
- Green space set aside?
- Street maintenance – repeated paving/overlays
- Deer risk

Visibility

- Vegetation into streets, sidewalks, views near driveways, busy intersections
- Adequate parking with new development projects, student parking near new sports complex (garage cost, SHSU long term plans)
- Surplus parking, use for satellite parking, shuttle service?
- Downtown parking – capacity for more activity? Other options, University sidewalks, pedestrian mall (Sam Houston at 12th Street)

Expanded recycling

- Litter control, curbside

Gateway efforts – I-45 at 11th Street; Kudos on spur 94, do in residential areas (TxDOT on highways)

Chamber of Commerce feedback

Meeting Notes

- Huntsville image (Spur 94), take if for granted? How far on tree preservation?

WARD 2 CONGRESS – SEPTEMBER 14, 2006

Input from residents

- ♦ Eminent Domain; when to use (policy)
- ♦ Major City expenditures, procedures, bid policy/process
- ♦ Library – now not 2 years, expansion/new facility, meeting space, adequate facility (children’s program, teens, adults), computer space, room for today’s materials
- ♦ Water bills (and sewers)
- ♦ Affordability
- ♦ Protect beauty, quality of life
- ♦ Recycling/composting
- ♦ Sidewalks, safe routes to/from school, in growth areas too (Veterans)
- ♦ Driveway standards (ADA)
- ♦ Re-zoning concerns
- ♦ Basic City services (customer service), responsiveness, results
- ♦ Funds accountability, City resources
- ♦ Help people who need it most
- ♦ New development at Smither Overpass
- ♦ Transparency of process
- ♦ Infrastructure support
- ♦ Kids, “No child left behind” (beyond school), supervision, nutrition, programs (mixed ages)
- ♦ City role (coordination, support)
- ♦ Loss of business (Brown Oil Tool), neglect, failed shopping centers, banks
- ♦ Golf course history, financing
- ♦ Convention facilities
- ♦ Losing people (beyond SHSU, prisons)
- ♦ School capacity/facilities
- ♦ TDCJ personnel, Austin
- ♦ Streets
- ♦ Fire/Polish
- ♦ SHSU growth (student safety), dormitory safety
- ♦ Beyond negativity, the past
- ♦ Emerging traffic problems, shuttle system (residents, students, visitors)
- ♦ Technology funding, police vehicle laptops
- ♦ Job opportunities, here versus commuting
- ♦ Loss of trees
- ♦ Underutilized existing buildings – New Development
- ♦ Project/funding priorities, citizen input, bond issues, budget, voter approval over

certain size

- ♦ Student drinking/driving, longer hours in town (weekends), alcohol education
- ♦ Don't forget about minority community, reinvestment, older areas (past 11th Street)
- ♦ Zero sprawl.org
- ♦ Come together
- ♦ Downtown, business strength, bus station impact (prisoners), tourism, I-45, students spending elsewhere (2:00 am)
- ♦ Drinking water quality, golf course watering
- ♦ Trees/ecology, Aesthetics/concrete
- ♦ Pedestrian friendly
- ♦ Business development, How? City role or no role?
- ♦ Traffic/speeds
- ♦ Signals (TxDOT role)
- ♦ Spending and taxes/revenue, priorities/citizen role
- ♦ TIRZ, when to use, fairness, short-term revenue impact (subsidizing), Hearing fear about taxes, services, economy, business loss
- ♦ Existing town/services, spend on it, police/fire, library, infrastructure
- ♦ Focus of comprehensive plan vs. short term issues/policies, short/long term connection
- ♦ Public finance chapter
- ♦ What type of industry bringing?, basic businesses (new money, people)
- ♦ Comprehensive Plan wants/needs, quality of life
- ♦ Trans-Texas corridor, potential impacts, City position, hurricane evacuation impacts
- ♦ Large institutions, cost of services
- ♦ City/SHSU library coordination
- ♦ Workers/SHSU, those who don't live here (tax/utility rates)
- ♦ City/County coordination, funding/services equity
- ♦ Better salaries elsewhere – cost of living
- ♦ Property maintenance (rentals)
- ♦ Re-zoning impacts, disclosure of property interests, accountability in process
- ♦ Natural vs. subsidized growth
- ♦ Citizen vote on Comprehensive Plan before adoption, How to get to consensus?, feedback during process, set priorities through process
- ♦ Use as “mediation” process for community
- ♦ Rising tax appraisals
- ♦ Old apartments, strip centers – impacts
- ♦ Downtown vitality/quality matters
- ♦ I-45 corridor (green) – Conroe, Willis lessons
- ♦ Look to other successful communities, model business development (vs. more of the same)
- ♦ What not willing to do? Landscaping, signs
- ♦ Main Street support for existing business – new signs
- ♦ Tax base – spread the tax burden

Meeting Notes

- ♦ Need database of information to participate in Comprehensive Plan process – Draft Chapter 1

WARD 3 CONGRESS – SEPTEMBER 21, 2006

Input from residents

- ♦ Affordable, beyond mobile homes
- ♦ Manufactured home ordinance
- ♦ Aggressive program (incentives \$30-50K)
- ♦ Plan should reflect SHSU Growth, 20,000 by 2013-14
- ♦ Infrastructure to support growth
- ♦ Economic development – retail
- ♦ Keep retail dollars here, capture market, franchise
- ♦ City and Chamber of Commerce effort
- ♦ Better explanation of Comprehensive Plan
- ♦ Clean community (updated), curb and gutter, drainage, sidewalks, kids safety (traffic)
- ♦ Needs of children, poverty, child abuse, programs, activities, attract families, guidance/supervision
- ♦ Blighted areas, street maintenance, lack of sidewalks (kids to/from school), wastewater service (vs. septic), building regulations (floodplain), enforcement
- ♦ Water supply planning, future costs/access to water for economic development
- ♦ Ward 3 focus, special oversight committee, address specific problems cited
- ♦ SHSU – own ward, campus currently split into all four, at least put into one ward
- ♦ Old high school, tax-free status, encourage development
- ♦ Teacher/police salaries
- ♦ Main Street program, enhance
- ♦ Student, community interaction
- ♦ Shuttle system, handicapped students
- ♦ Parking problems around SHSU, longer than 2 hour parking, off-campus parking
- ♦ Equal services within City limits
- ♦ Publicize development/annexation plans, public comment, who to call at City?
- ♦ Events, bring community together
- ♦ Commercial development eliminating homes
- ♦ SHSU growth, impacts on streets, sewer, police/fire, role in supporting City services (Board of Regents, state laws)
- ♦ Desire to volunteer for firefighting
- ♦ Student willingness to help pay for shuttle service
- ♦ Police coordination
- ♦ New students/professors, will help support community
- ♦ Student groups – volunteer opportunities/community projects “bearcat attack”
- ♦ Grant funding for Ward 3/neighborhood improvements – beyond City budget
- ♦ Workforce/affordable housing

- ♦ Rectify Ward 3 services/infrastructure
- ♦ Hear from more residents, Hispanic community too, up to standard elsewhere
- ♦ Ordinances are limiting, residential, retail, economic development
- ♦ Non-profits maxed out, mission, shelters, YMCA, need more for growth, need more for today's city (Ward 3)

Break-out Session One

- ♦ Elkins, poor streets, parking on street makes it difficult to get through, city wide
- ♦ Maintain what we have, upgrade, decent water
- ♦ Need sidewalks, schools, inner city
- ♦ Library
- ♦ Attract shoppers
- ♦ Ward 3 Ryan's Ferry Road
- ♦ City keep their property clean, sell it?
- ♦ Eastham Thompson Park, not safe, too wooded, place for walking
- ♦ Parks in this area – growing in this area, buy now
- ♦ Need development along Veteran's Memorial
- ♦ To/around school, walking in street (MLK Street, near cemetery), high need areas
- ♦ Need public sewers, get rid of septic tanks, health hazard
- ♦ Avenues – no/few sidewalks around schools
- ♦ Downtown sidewalk repair
- ♦ More police with growth – safety is essential, i.e. parks
- ♦ Attractive opportunities. for polices/fire – salary
- ♦ Senior services/programs
- ♦ Citizen empowerment, high single parent households
- ♦ Build your own sidewalk
- ♦ Crime prevention – what can we do?
- ♦ Sidewalks, space limitations with ditches/setbacks
- ♦ Assisted living neighborhood, combine with daycare- interaction
- ♦ 11th Street and Sam Houston – two major thoroughfares, how to move traffic (crossings across I-45, east-west traffic flow)
- ♦ Remove blight – junk cars, trash
- ♦ Street lights for security, on existing poles
- ♦ Housing for our workforce, incentives to attract development
- ♦ Property needed for Habitat for Humanity, 100 pending applications, \$40-\$45000 on 15-20 year terms
- ♦ Powell Road too narrow for traffic/sidewalks
- ♦ Convention/meeting space/facilities, lack of hotels/motels, convention center – attract visitors
- ♦ Surrounded by state property – tax exempt, lobby to release back to tax roles
- ♦ Attract more bikers, i.e. state park, forest
- ♦ Library needed, children development, history preservation, genealogy
- ♦ High water costs
- ♦ Improved, bigger water lines, fire flows – 2-3" lines, more hydrants, pressure, aging pipes, contributing to street problems

Meeting Notes

- ♦ Tree protection

Break-out Session Two

- ♦ Brazos Transit, downtown, neighborhoods, now more apartments, restore system
- ♦ University/private shuttle service?
- ♦ Basic infrastructure for neighborhood improvements
- ♦ Loops around other Texas cities – incomplete loop
- ♦ Business parks, visitor traffic, business focus
- ♦ Library, more space on site for parking – flip side, keeping library/post office/etc, Downtown, programs/facilities too (long-term)
- ♦ Constraints to airport growth
- ♦ SHSU parking – visitor access
- ♦ SHSU – vital to community, community/evening students (more options/ticketing)
- ♦ Airport – long term outlook? asset or liability? extent of use?
- ♦ Dangerous intersections, University at 11th Street, 4-way stops, S.H. 19 on/off ramps, Goree Unit – ramp/exit, I-45 west side to Veterans Memorial (continuous left turn), 12th Street at Sam Houston (Café Texan), I-45 ramp at Hillcrest Ford, after school traffic on S.H. 190
- ♦ Children safety crossing highways
- ♦ 11th Street at S.H. 30 – sitting at red light (TxDOT signal), anywhere south onto 11th Street N/S signals, Signal timing – evening
- ♦ Noon downtown – worst traffic, lunch hour parking, signals
- ♦ Westbound South onto Sam Houston (backing up into other intersection)
- ♦ Jury days – square traffic
- ♦ Downtown walking, sidewalk maintenance, suitable for handicapped
- ♦ Prison events/activities, location of release point (locate on major thoroughfare), bus traffic, family pick-up traffic
- ♦ 11th Street parking, change to parallel vs. diagonal, ties up traffic
- ♦ University at 16th, 2-hour parking in front of residence hall for businesses
- ♦ Cut-thru traffic, Forest Hills
- ♦ Older areas – narrow streets, parking, businesses, do better in newer areas
- ♦ Tree planting on I-45, maintenance burden, more targeted landscaping

Break-out Session One

- ♦ Basic services – existing City (water, sewer) for all tax paying residents before annexing more
- ♦ Address pockets (services around), Johnson Road, east of 19th Street between S.H. 190, curb and gutter, property/title issues? Talk to people there
- ♦ Hilly city, drainage, dead-end streets
- ♦ One-way idea, 10th – West bound/11th – East bound
- ♦ Shuttle routing, neighborhoods, Brazos Transit, clockwise – around City, counter clock wise around City

- ♦ S.H. 75, 10th Street shopping centers, major streets, Sam Houston
- ♦ Student shuttles vs. parking, Montgomery, Lake Rd, apartments, Downtown, 11th across I-45
- ♦ Park and ride on I-45 (Wal-Mart parking area, commuter students)
- ♦ Entertainment venues, drinkers, University ride program
- ♦ Parking on narrow streets, visibility, traffic safety
- ♦ Sam Houston Avenue, pedestrian safety
- ♦ School drop-off/pick-up traffic
- ♦ Retired/senior population (Veterans)
- ♦ Avenues, Forest Hills, Elkins, Carriage Inn, transit
- ♦ Tax burden
- ♦ Coordinated projects, resurface, lights, beautification, sidewalks
- ♦ Street lighting, power company, cost share (1/3, 1/3 city)
- ♦ Drinking out of town – driving back, later drinking hours, keep money here, safe ride program
- ♦ Drugs in neighborhoods/business areas, drug houses
- ♦ Police/fire funding, money spent on aerials/GIS, many older structures in Huntsville, staffing
- ♦ Fire hydrant coverage, water pressure, multi-story buildings
- ♦ SHSU criminal justice students, firefighting volunteers
- ♦ TDCJ/SHSU/City, firefighting coordination, communications
- ♦ Shopping center cut-throughs, Wal-Mart Dr. N.

Break-out Session Two

- ♦ New subdivision should reserve area for parks/open space – park-n-ride areas
- ♦ Who maintains parks – City or residents
- ♦ Compatible adjacent uses particularly north and east sides – zoning?
- ♦ Water prices – business impacts, concern for rate hikes, affordable
- ♦ Surface versus ground water
- ♦ Houston impacts
- ♦ In Bluebonnet water dist., Sec. 14 groundwater management area
- ♦ Trinity River (75%) + Wells (25%)
- ♦ Trinity River Authority (TRA) – 10 million gallon contract – 2020 contract horizon, only 30" line – limiting
- ♦ 7.5 million gallon ground storage
- ♦ Boost University Ave. i.e. Univ. attraction, bookstore, coffee shops, etc, Downtown expansion
- ♦ Improve pedestrian friendliness on University Avenue, parking, business impacts
- ♦ Better police protection, more officers, out-manned
- ♦ More parks, safety is an issue, criminal activity
- ♦ Neighborhood watch program
- ♦ Street lights needed in crime areas, Dark on University Ave.
- ♦ On Univ. some security concerns – campus
- ♦ Emergency call boxes in parks, other areas

Meeting Notes

- ♦ Fire stations to east and south, affect on insurance rates
- ♦ Parking structures – Downtown, street car circulator

WARD 4 CONGRESS – SEPTEMBER 28, 2006

Input from residents

- ♦ Elkins water quality is poor
- ♦ Water rates – people on fixed incomes (now, future) – disconnects
- ♦ Use of “dedicated” funds
- ♦ Essential city services – missing in some areas
- ♦ Library
 - space needed
 - expansion with growth
- ♦ Police/fire coverage/facilities
- ♦ Narrow streets (Ward 4 – Montgomery)
 - safety, visibility
 - pedestrian safety
 - shuttle (people without cars)
- ♦ Street maintenance – repeat patching – (Elkins area)
- ♦ Long-term water supply (Houston competition)
 - additional TRA water purchases (potential) +10 million gallons – lock in price now
 - water bill impact? (extra \$1 per month)
 - surface water dependence (ground quality)
- ♦ Good services/facilities/infrastructure (Bond issue)
 - except library (for city size)
 - new library building, cultural resources
- ♦ Plan/provide for long-range growth
 - growth is coming
 - broader tax base, jobs
- ♦ Retail sales drain – to south
 - tax revenue, employment, convenience
- ♦ City’s role in promoting/managing growth, business development
 - economic development tools – tax breaks, TIF, eminent domain
 - market driven
 - rezoning potential
- ♦ Business attraction – profit potential
- ♦ Safety, trucks backing out, more traffic, speeds, road design/angles, Sam Houston – Sycamore/19th Street
- ♦ SHSU growth (16,000 to 20,000 students)
- ♦ Public safety
 - Fire coverage (dorm construction)
 - Pedestrians (especially Sam Houston)

- Shuttle - less traffic
- Extended drinking hours (late-night driving)
- City support for local entertainment
- City/SHSU library coordination (share card)
- ◆ Street safety
 - no sidewalks, ditches, kids walking in streets
 - exploit/preserve environmental assets (tree preservation)
 - eco-tourism
 - bike trail (north side to state park)
 - lifestyle benefits
- ◆ Transportation plan
 - 16th/20th Street connections to I-45? (existing connections already)
 - Protect neighborhoods (not arterials, freeway connections)
 - S.H. 19, S.H. 75, F.M. 1374 traffic (from south) SHSU
 - beyond lines on map (recognize constraints)
 - recreation center – community survey
 - last parks and recreation plan – (priorities)
 - cost
 - youth activities
 - City of this size (county too)
 - sports courts, gymnasium
 - gradual budgeting for project
 - Central Park
 - Library too
- ◆ I-45 corridor – metro areas growth
 - pass-by traffic
 - retirees
 - state institutions (SHSU, TDCJ)
 - tourism (lost prison rodeo)
 - keep retail sales here – bond support
 - services to accommodate growth
- ◆ Government help facilitate growth
 - public investments (water)
 - long-term benefit/cost
- ◆ Police staffing, coverage (neighborhoods)
- ◆ Fire staffing, adequate protection
- ◆ Property tax – increases (assessments too – leveling)
- ◆ Retention – youth, SHSU grads
 - make a living
 - cost of living
 - schools
 - library
 - sports
 - safety/police
 - Huntsville charm

Meeting Notes

- senior-youth connection
- want to be here – kids/family
- ♦ Impact/burden of new development
 - proper standards/quality (avoid public fixes later)
 - mobile home development standards (done elsewhere) – tax base impacts
 - preserve value
 - affordable housing alternatives
 - SHSU retail market – local spending (SHSU growth good)
 - Future transportation problems with City, SHSU growth
 - more money for smaller cities (highway money)
- ♦ Address past problems - retention
 - Old Colony Road (roads, drainage) – beyond grants
 - Water supply/quality, end ground supply? Mixing with surface water?
 - Market study – true growth/potential market
 - Schools, enrollment decline
 - Library quality
 - Lots of plans – use them, adopt this one, citizen vote?

Break-out Session One

- ♦ Elkins groundwater poor quality
 - unpredictable
 - hassle (laundry)
- ♦ Drainage
 - needs improvement
 - street flooding
 - driver safety
- ♦ Public financing
 - economic development
 - saturating market
 - Yes, standards (e.g. Septic)
- ♦ Use of enterprise funds (water, sewer)
- ♦ Debt burden
- ♦ New development
 - new apartments
 - tree protection (not clear cutting)
 - aesthetic impact
- ♦ Zoning trade-offs
 - protect property values
 - buffers between uses
 - protect residential neighborhoods
 - good administration, decisions
 - affordability impacts
- ♦ Business environment - basic services
- ♦ Bond elections – public awareness
- ♦ Quality affordable housing – how?

- ♦ Multi-Use downtown – maintain
- ♦ Few new homes outside of Elkins (\$150,000 median price needed)
 - few new subdivisions
 - available properties
 - development codes – conducive
 - infrastructure costs
 - lot costs
 - zoning of surrounding land
 - Elkins buffer zone along Veterans
- ♦ Neighborhood conservation
- ♦ University bus service
 - announced Fall 05
 - students didn't use
 - to edge of campus only
- ♦ Two apartments now providing shuttles
 - every 15 minutes
 - only for apartment residents
 - pick up others?
 - to Trinity, New Waverly
 - Shuttle from Woodlands
- ♦ Walk-overs at Sam Houston
 - 17th Street
 - 19th Street
 - 20th Street
 - or a crossing guard
- ♦ Walk-unders
- ♦ Sidewalks
- ♦ 2-day advance notice for transit now
- ♦ Read-able, larger signs
- ♦ Maintain sidewalks
 - enforce condition/maintenance
 - Lake Road apartments – University
 - Feeders to the University
 - 11th Street no sidewalks
 - I-45 to downtown
 - crosswalks/crossing lights
 - 1st National Bank – Town Creek park connection – under/over walk
 - Healthy options
 - New streets require sidewalks
 - Sight distance at intersections
- ♦ Recycled sidewalks- rubberized
- ♦ Transit route
 - Lake Rd. Montgomery
 - Brazos transit tried system
 - Advertise/publicity/public info

Meeting Notes

- ♦ Innovative approaches – other cities
- ♦ Travel time by each mode – map information/routes
- ♦ Safety – pedestrian vs. traffic
- ♦ Trucks turn-around on property
 - not backing onto roadways
 - some regulations too rigid – flexible, travel speed in certain locations
- ♦ Cline Street – narrow curves – no sidewalks, two daycares nearby
- ♦ one-way pairs to/from I-5 i.e. 10th Street/11th Street – study
- ♦ “No parking” signs around University
 - no parking stickers
 - 20th Street example
- ♦ Parking on both sides of streets
 - Ave. O – 22nd Street
 - Shouldn’t allow
- ♦ Near term needs are a priority – how bond issue relates
- ♦ Satellite park-n-ride – apartments are providing shuttle
- ♦ Lack of spaces for University or not convenient
- ♦ They over sell University parking stickers - problem
- ♦ Riverwalk – catch water – easy to recycle
- ♦ Curb and gutter needed
- ♦ Sewer – Old Colony Road
- ♦ Incentives for cyclists/pedestrians around University – give them right-of-way
- ♦ Loss of parking due to University buildings – poor lighting for walking – safety
- ♦ Bike lane on streets – re-stripe roads
- ♦ Hike/bike trails within/to parks/fitness, etc.
- ♦ F.M. 2821 park and ride existing
- ♦ Timing of traffic lights
 - Sam Houston/11th Street – TxDOT
- ♦ F.M. 2821 – MLK and high school – new lights
- ♦ Ordinance to prevent boom boxes
- ♦ Bury downtown power lines
- ♦ Publicize positives, i.e. trails now
- ♦ Cameras on roads, etc.
- ♦ Executive Order for transit in rural areas
- ♦ Two smaller vs. one large library
- ♦ Fix long-standing problems – high priority, spend money on essentials
- ♦ Change ordinances for safety
- ♦ Where money spent is issue
- ♦ Quadrant in town without curbs/sidewalks
- ♦ Federal money for airport, look into

Break-out Session Two

- ♦ Water re-use – runoff, Lake Conroe impact
- ♦ Clear cutting – development character
- ♦ Empty Downtown buildings – extending Downtown toward SHSU



- ♦ Affordable housing/water rates – students
- ♦ Public streets – rethink as greenways/public spaces
- ♦ Extend Crepe myrtles from Downtown (11th/19th, Sam Houston)
- ♦ Aesthetics – I-45 corridor, land use planning
- ♦ Business environment/attraction
 - Quality of life criteria - perception
 - Education quality – salaries
 - Retail coming up I-45
 - Realistic look at basic industries – target right types
 - Retirement
 - Curbside recycling
- ♦ Recreation – opportunities
- ♦ Image (websites)
- ♦ Support existing/local businesses (Chamber)
- ♦ National Forest – State Park asset
- ♦ Recreation center/facility (activities)
- ♦ Neighborhood protection
 - conservation approach
 - not wait for requests? Existing neighborhoods
 - not just east side
 - avoid encroachment
- ♦ Neighborhood – level planning/zoning

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FORUM – OCTOBER 5, 2006

- ♦ Use existing assets (SHSU)
- ♦ Jobs for student/faculty/spouse
- ♦ Golf course “scheme”
- ♦ Bike/pedestrian lanes
- ♦ Bar closing times
- ♦ Build a better Huntsville.... And be ready when they come
- ♦ Secure water now for growth
- ♦ Approve Comprehensive Plan by voters
- ♦ Bond elections
- ♦ Student economic impact
- ♦ Music scene (2:00 a.m. closing)
- ♦ Public transportation
- ♦ Downtown area
- ♦ Public safety
- ♦ Montgomery County growth
- ♦ Water option (283 option thru 2020) Trinity River Authority (TRA)
- ♦ TIF/TIRZ “scheme”
- ♦ Veteran’s building project
- ♦ 911 response limited to land line

Meeting Notes

- ♦ County inclusion in planning
- ♦ Use University police for crossings?
- ♦ TIRZ for distressed areas
- ♦ “TANSTAFL” – There ain’t no such thing as a free lunch
- ♦ Need for tax increase to support more in youth
- ♦ Clean industry
- ♦ Promote small business development
- ♦ Identity crisis (Woodland Hills of Texas)
- ♦ Tourism impact
- ♦ Add small business list to plan
- ♦ Provide youth activities
- ♦ Loss of trees
- ♦ New/expand library
- ♦ Water quality
- ♦ Don’t need Comprehensive Plan – need responsive government
- ♦ I.D public hands to be returned to private hands
- ♦ Have multiple libraries
- ♦ Water catchment system (waive water fee)
- ♦ Affordable housing needed
- ♦ Plan language against eminent domain
- ♦ Raise standards and pay for police
- ♦ More development around SHSU – spurred by SHSU investments
- ♦ Few sidewalks, no bike lanes (especially Downtown, SHSU area)
- ♦ Improving quality of life NOW – not in 20 years
- ♦ Businesses that FIT here
- ♦ Clean environment – asset
- ♦ Social challenges “under the radar” – concerned community effort (cost/benefit), youth/families

- ♦ City investment in essential systems for today’s needs plus to prepare for coming growth
- ♦ Actions, budget strategies to be taken based on Comprehensive Plan – citizen scrutiny
- ♦ Who bears “burden of economic development”
- ♦ Huntsville music scene – drinking hours limitation
- ♦ Public safety infrastructure – 9-1-1, EMS, dispatching, communications equipment (city/county/SHSU coordination)
- ♦ Security first – business, neighborhood stability
- ♦ Maintain a city with cohesive center (unlike some other cities)
- ♦ Youth activities , family attraction, worker attraction, business attraction
- ♦ I-45 corridor aesthetics – tree buffers around development
- ♦ Library asset – expansion or new building? Maintain existing, two additional neighborhood sites?
- ♦ Specific/small/incremental efforts – “magnetic” city, draw, retain (what factors?)
- ♦ “Re-expose” natural terrain in Huntsville (especially Downtown, SHSU)

- ◆ Incentives for water conservation/catchment/re-use
- ◆ Retention/attraction of public safety employees – higher pay, higher qualifications

SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY FORUM – OCTOBER 10, 2006

Expanded Drinking Curfew to 2am:

- ◆ Closing time at local taverns is a Texas Alcohol and Beverage Commission (TABC) safety issue
- ◆ Alcohol curfew – shuttle is needed
- ◆ Do not support the 2:00 a.m. curfew
- ◆ Student government supports the curfew not to encourage drinking but to expand the local economy
- ◆ Student bartender – students driving at midnight – need alcohol education, which he feels will come as part of the curfew expansion
- ◆ SHSU student population – how many are of legal drinking age?
- ◆ What about alcohol on campus? It's a liability issue
- ◆ Curfew extension will improve the student's GPA because Thursday is now the de facto Friday night – if bars were open later, more people would stay in town and therefore, more students would study while here, resulting in higher GPAs
- ◆ A student's focus should be to get an education – not keeping bars open until 2:00 a.m.
- ◆ According a local bar owner – an expanded 2:00 a.m. curfew will not help local businesses much because the students don't spend much to begin with

Transportation:

- ◆ Street lighting (i.e. Montgomery Road) – not all streets are lit at night, it's a safety issue
- ◆ Transportation: shuttle system – lot of residential traffic from students
- ◆ Transportation – biking across SHSU is "scary" – a network of bike paths is needed
- ◆ The Comprehensive Plan should truly take a comprehensive view of the community, especially when it comes to transportation issues through town
- ◆ Street lights – In Huntsville it is illegal to turn right on red; Sam Houston and Sycamore has signal issues
- ◆ Pedestrian traffic: HEB at Sam Houston and Lake Road is very dangerous
- ◆ Parking Downtown: do not want on-street parking
- ◆ SHSU enrollment equates to a parking crisis and litter from students across town is an issue – students need to pick up after themselves
- ◆ Highways 45 and 19 – there is a large parking lot there now – possibility for a shuttle lot

Meeting Notes

- ♦ Park and ride – presently there are five to 10 cars there at any given time – needs to be linked
- ♦ How would a park and ride work? Possible grant dollars and nominal increases in students fees (ex: UT shuttle system as a model)

Infrastructure:

- ♦ SHSU: New construction on campus has not had reliable inspections performed; existing codes are not followed and therefore, taxpayers get hit with additional costs
- ♦ Utilities – there is a high cost of water in town – need to look for opportunities to capture run-off
- ♦ Infrastructure – need to focus on how to expand and upgrade existing infrastructure; a recycling program would be good

Economic Development:

- ♦ SHSU is promoting a number of graduate programs but need better local jobs and amenities to attract both students and faculty
- ♦ Business prohibited by local zoning laws?
- ♦ Local shopping – would like to see more student-oriented opportunities
- ♦ Growth of community over the past five years – more students stay on weekends – City should invest in social opportunities for students – could turn into revenue generators for the local economy
- ♦ A broader range of businesses is needed in the community
- ♦ Community involvement – need an SBA office in town
- ♦ Students do put money into the local economy – the City should work hard to improve themselves or students will go elsewhere
- ♦ Businesses are looking for per capita income/traffic counts – big box retailers will not expand into Huntsville until certain thresholds are met
- ♦ Incentives will give us things to play around with but won't change the economic profile of the citizens
- ♦ Direct relationship between business/family/community – it's a leap of faith for businesses to locate here – more need to make one
- ♦ Student related businesses struggle in the "off season"
- ♦ What is tourism like here? What kind of impact does it make?
- ♦ Incentives are only as good as the businesses they attract – need to expand beyond the retail focus on industrial and offices (ex: a regional call center for State Farm or a regional distribution center) – there is a delayed satisfaction for sales tax – chicken versus egg issue
- ♦ Highway 75 used to be heavy truck traffic through town – the point is that change is coming (businesses are coming) it just takes time but the economy needs to expand first

Quality of Life:

- ♦ Family life is an issue: it is difficult to attract professors because there are limited

Meeting Notes

professional opportunities for their spouses and educational opportunities for their children; housing is also challenging

- ♦ 3,744 non-traditional students attend SHSU – they would like to stay in town but find it difficult to find jobs and housing for their families. Parks and overall quality of life for their families is difficult.
- ♦ Local law enforcement – students feel there is a double standard
- ♦ New development – tree preservation ordinance in place
- ♦ City police have an adversarial relationship with students
- ♦ Students don't feel welcome by local merchants
- ♦ City should preserve a sense of community and history – not succumb to growth pressures
- ♦ Tree ordinance – no over planting of trees, will hide the views
- ♦ Segregation – look at how the Ward maps are drawn, they dilute the SHSU voting power – the City should redraw the maps (this was echoed two times)
- ♦ Local social opportunities are limited – need to expand to meet student demands
- ♦ SHSU growth is not much – won't see much local growth until Houston gets here
- ♦ Many children are home schooled due to the poor public school options
- ♦ Maybe SHSU should consider “more click and less brick” as they expand programs in the future
- ♦ Public school system will be addressed in the Community Profile and Economic Development portions of the Comprehensive Plan
- ♦ Community needs to support and protect the SHSU name – lobby to protect the name and it's identity
- ♦ CPAC Board – should request another meeting at SHSU during the day to better capture faculty, staff and students who commute
- ♦ Like the country/rural feel of the community

Meeting Notes

Input Received via E-Mail

Thursday, August 31, 2006

Good day to you! My name is _____ and my significant other is _____. I just found your website and we have lived in Huntsville for 4+ years and would like to learn more. Currently we live in the area you consider Ward 3 and are getting ready to move from renters to owners. We will be closing on a house soon that is in Ward 3. I would like more information on events for this area. I also work for a company here in Huntsville that I will pass this information along to also.

Thank You

Thursday, September 14, 2006

I'm sorry the meeting became so politicized this evening that I and others left early. I would like to suggest that drainage issues be addressed in the plan. I would also suggest that there be a plan in which citizens, along with assistance from city staff, be permitted to address issues on their property, drainage, for less than the multi-million dollar plans previously suggested by the staff.

Thank you,

Friday, September 15, 2006

1. The Term Advisory Committee has many ramifications. The Public participants should be made aware of the fact that the final vote belongs to their elected officials. The only other solution to having full Public participation would be for the City Council to require a vote of the final document.
2. Realizing that taxable properties is a solid way to reduce the current tax burden-Proposal/grants/projects etc. should be directed at needed projects that will add additional funds to the cities bottom line of revenues. I would support more affordable housing for the working class who are residents currently renting. Huntsville also should look at our aging population who are/ or will be on fixed incomes in terms of affordable housing. Right now there is a gap (the rich can afford private retirement type living, the income qualifying can qualify for subsidized) but there are no reasonably priced properties for those in between.,)
3. Enforcement of services required involving continued maintenance of city services, i.e. streets, sewers parks which show potential investors a safe, secure and well maintained public works department.

4. Regardless of the economic level of a neighborhood there should be basic amenities provided such as decent streets, sewers, garbage pick up etc. there are areas within 3 minutes of the new pool where the streets are horrible. entry into and out of these areas appear to be like other neighborhood roads until you get out of view from adjacent streets i.e. Smith Hill, Gospel Hill and areas in the new colony neighborhood.
5. Traffic patterns need to be documented beyond those which are controlled by the State to ease congestion and make traveling within the city a less frustrating experience. (the street behind American Bank serves no purpose that I can see)
6. A public transportation mode explored at least for peak times of day i.e. Someone suggested a trolley I see this applicable to the areas in the immediate downtown area only, Austin, TX has mini buses maybe this concept of how they developed their routes could be looked at I believe they run in core areas of need in that city.
7. A project that would recognize owners of properties that have contributed to the beautification and quality of business rental properties in the Community.
8. Sidewalks would be a major project if viewed traditionally,(both sides of a street) the city could look at putting sidewalks on one side of a street particularly in school zones where schools exist.
9. We could have some sort of usage tax for those people who work (or have businesses) in Huntsville and live outside our community. I would much rather prefer usage of the areas bordering the interstate, I for one would not want to live in an area bordering a highway - plus if development occurs there there is a greater possibility of travelers stopping and making purchases in route- (StarBucks appears to be having good traffic off the freeway) perhaps we could just add more buffer zones i.e. green spaces etc. between the developments. and not put them so close to the ramps-& exits.
10. I too would like to know what projects are currently in the works in our city. Rumors are ramped about developments, here and there - this is why citizens have no trust level with the city of Huntsville they are always closing the public out of information, A true display of our cities budget- A audit from a outside source is badly needed to set straight the cities finances.
11. Better Police community relations with the students on/off campus, and ethnic residents in general. Service should be equally applied to all citizens, and not of a harassment nature.
12. I would like to explore specific industries, businesses that would work in Huntsville and then go after those entities.
13. I agree with the need for a library
14. City Hall when built could have served the larger community by incorporating a more usable

Meeting Notes

15. The City Council should stop catering to established or power groups in the city. Projects should be based on the benefits to the community as a whole and how the project will impact the budget, tax base and the citizens of the community.

Wednesday, September 20, 2006

City Council Members and Mr. Hamrick,

At the beginning of each of the Ward Congress' the consultant mentions a stakeholder meeting held on July 6th. Can you please tell us or me who the stakeholders are for the Comprehensive Plan.

Thursday, September 21, 2006

A lot of prime property within the city limits is devoted to pasture for TDCJ horses. I think future plans should include better use of this land. For example, the pasture across from the Citco station at the Goree overpass would be an excellent site for a Texas State Veterans Home; it's got the utilities close by, is close to the hospital, has convenient access to I-45, and is a therapeutic setting for a facility of this type. It would also bring additional employment opportunities to Huntsville. I would think about 20 acres would be enough land and since it would be devoted to an alternate state use, the transfer could be made without a purchase by the City.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

Monday, September 25, 2006

I don't play golf, nor has any Golfer darkened our doorsteps, for any kind of service. My water bill has gone up tremendously, and I really can't afford any more of your mistakes, or big thoughts, (redoing the pool concrete...) so please leave ward 4 out of the expense. It is obvious you are trying to do the right thing, and good luck with that.... Have a wonderful day, and keep on smiling, is about as positive as it seems to get for you guys. Thanks for spending those tax dollars, just slow it down a little. If there seems to be too many coming your way... give a little back. In my experiences, people would rather have a little cash back than a pretty sidewalk. Look at what happened to Downtown... less parking all around the square, and pretty sidewalks. I would rather have the parking, and a dirt trail. Thanks.

**Tuesday, October 03, 2006**

To whom it may concern,

I am currently living in Huntsville and I have a problem with small businesses being able to operate out of homes in the avenues. I pay a lot of money for rent each month and I am constantly disturbed by nearby businesses. Every day from 9a.m. to 8p.m. there are cars parked in front of my house, this is not what I expected when I moved here.

If these businesses were no longer allowed to operate out of their homes, they would have to rent a store front. In turn, it would increase the demand for buildings and market areas in Huntsville city limits.

This issue needs to be addressed for the sake of small town growth. I love Huntsville but I will end up moving back to Houston because of the small businesses being able to operate right next door to my supposed to be quite house.

Friday, January 12, 2007

I just want to say thank you for echoing the very reason why we chose to locate our business on the historic square in downtown Huntsville along the defunct (but hopefully not for long) University corridor. Huntsville needs to take advantage of two of its greatest assets - the University and heritage tourism (preserving and revitalizing Texas downtown squares). There is a wonderful piece that recently aired on National Public Radio about Main Street and historic downtown squares. Jim Bell (my husband's father) is the newscaster there who conducted the interview with the head spokesperson of Main Street in the Austin office. The piece painted a picture of how important heritage tourism has become in Texas and towns that are re-inventing themselves and prospering from the inflow of tourism dollars. We would love to see the square come alive at night with various restaurant choices, music venues, shopping and entertainment. It would be wonderful to link the University with a well lit walking, strolling, bike and car route to the square. Many businesses along University Avenue and within a few square blocks of downtown would benefit from something like this. New businesses would be more apt to locate there if traffic and awareness increased. It still seems that the mainstream would like to see the development of the generic I-45 corridor. Although this type of growth is beneficial it does nothing to enhance the uniqueness of this town we now call home. We really believe you have an ally in the downtown Main Street program. You definitely have one in us.

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